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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8721
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 3563

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR GR TU
SUBJ: BITSIOS-CAGLAYANGIL MEETING

REF: A. ATHENS 3559 (NOTAL)
B. ATHENS 3523 (NOTAL)

1. I SAW FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS TODAY AND HE FILLED ME IN ON THE LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS LEADING TO LAST NIGHT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS MEETING WITH TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL IN ROME MAY 17-19. BITSIOS SAID THAT EARLY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON CAGLAYANGIL GOT IN TOUCH WITH HIM BY TELEGRAM TO SAY THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO POSTPONE THE PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MAY 18 REFERENDUM IN CYPRUS ON THE TURKISH CYPRIOT "CONSTITUTION". CAGLAYANGIL SAID TO BITSIOS THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO GO AHEAD WITH THEIR PLANNED MEETING THIS WEEKEND BUT, NOT WANTING TO CONFINE THEIR DISCUSSION SIMPLY TO THE AEGEAN DISPUTE AND CYPRUS QUESTIONS,
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REQUESTED BITSIOS' AGREEMENT TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THEY WOULD

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DISCUSS "OTHER MATTERS" CONCERNING TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS.
IN LIGHT OF THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM
IN CYPRUS, AND AS A RECIPROCAL GESTURE OF GOODWILL, BITSIOS
CONCURRED AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE CONCLUDED TO HOLD AND ANNOUNCE
THE MEETING.

2. BITSIOS IS LEAVING TOMORROW (THURSDAY) TO ACCOMPANY PRIME
MINISTER CARAMANLIS ON HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO BONN, FOLLOWING
WHICH BITSIOS WILL FLY DIRECTLY TO ROME ON SATURDAY MAY 17.
HE SAID THAT HE AND CAGLAYANGIL HAVE AGREED TO HAVE AN
INITIAL PRIVATE MEETING -- JUST THE TWO OF THEM -- BEGINNING
AROUND 5 P.M. SATURDAY AFTERNOON. FOLLOWING THAT THEY WILL
MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFF AS NECESSARY SATURDAY EVENING,
ALL DAY SUNDAY AND A GOOD PART OF MONDAY. CAGLAYANGIL HAS
SAID HE HAS TO RETURN TO ANKARA MONDAY NIGHT, THE 19TH, TO BE
THERE FOR THE SUBSEQUENT ARRIVAL OF THE PAKISTANI FOREIGN
MINISTER. BITSIOS PLANS TO RETURN TO ATHENS EARLY TUESDAY
AFTERNOON MAY 20.

3. BITSIOS WILL BE ACCOMPANIED IN ROME BY TWO OR THREE TRUSTED
AND HIGHLY COMPETENT COLLEAGUES. POLITICAL DIRECTOR GENERAL
TZOUNIS AND DIRECTOR OF CYPRUS AND TURKISH AFFAIRS
VELISSAROPOULOS WILL PROCEED DIRECTLY FROM ATHENS TOROME
ON SATURDAY AND MEET BITSIOS THERE, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT
THE FORMER GREEK PERMREP AT THE UN, KARAYANNIS, WILL ALSO BE
PRESENT.

4. BITSIOS SAID HE WAS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS
MEETING AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT CAGLAYANGIL WOULD COME IN A
COOPERATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FRAME OF MIND. FOR HIS PART,
BITSIOS SAID, HE REALIZED THE HIGH IMPORTANCE OF THE MEETING AND
WOULD DO HIS UTMOST TO ASSURE THAT IT MARKED A SUCCESSFUL
FORWARD STEP IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS.
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